



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Grand Canyon National Park
P.O. Box 129
Grand Canyon, Arizona 86023-0129

Y15 (GRCA 8227)

September 30, 2003

Dear Interested Party:

Subject: Fire Management Plan Revision

Reference: Request for Comments on the Preparation of a New Fire Management Plan (General Scoping)

Grand Canyon National Park has initiated the process to update the existing Fire Management Plan. This plan, prepared in 1992, revised in 1995, and amended in 1998, needs to be revised. The National Park Service is now beginning the preparation of a new fire management plan that incorporates the latest science and the most recent federal fire policy to guide the fire management program at Grand Canyon National Park.

Purpose and Need for Action

National Park Service Director's Order 18 states that "Each park with vegetation capable of burning will prepare a fire management plan to guide a fire management program that is responsive to the Park's natural and cultural resource objectives and to safety considerations for park visitors, employees, and developed facilities." When completed, the Grand Canyon National Park Fire Management Plan will describe a detailed program of actions to carry out fire management policies and objectives at Grand Canyon National Park. The plan is needed in order to fully recognize the importance of fire management in promoting ecosystem sustainability; to prescribe methods to protect communities, developed areas, cultural resources and key wildlife habitat from unwanted, high-intensity wildland fires; to form the basis for short- and long-term project planning and scheduling; to form the basis for communication, coordination and project planning with regulatory and partner agencies; to provide a framework for managing fire in wilderness areas for wilderness resource goals and to minimize impacts to visitors in these areas; and because periodic maintenance of helispots and roads is necessary for the implementation of the Fire Management Plan.

The goals of the plan have their foundations in the Park's planning documents, including the General Management Plan (1995), Resources Management Plan (1997) and Backcountry Management Plan (1988) as well as in NPS and federal legislation and fire policy; The National Park Service Organic Act; and the legislation establishing Grand Canyon National Park. The fire management plan interdisciplinary team has been

working on the development of goals and objectives of the plan. Preliminary goals of the fire management plan are listed below. These are just that, preliminary, and may be revised as we work through the planning process. Issues or concerns you may have related to these preliminary goals are welcome.

1. **Ensure human life, health and safety.** The protection of firefighters and the public is the first priority in every fire management activity and during all phases of the fire management program.
2. **Identify and implement methods to restore and maintain park ecosystems and ecosystem processes that allow fire to play its natural role in the ecosystem, both as wildland fire and prescribed fire, to the maximum extent possible.** The natural interactions between fire and the environment should influence the type, abundance, and distribution of plants and animals in the park. A primary goal of the fire management plan is to restore or maintain natural fire regimes so that ecosystems can function without human interference, while also reducing the risk of large, unwanted wildfires..
3. **Reduce the risk of wildland fire to communities and developed areas in the wildland/urban interface.** The goal in these areas is to use fire management treatments to reduce the risk of unwanted wildland fire while restoring plant community structure.
4. **Fire management actions in proposed and potential wilderness areas will be managed for effective and consistent protection and restoration of wilderness values.**
5. **Aid in the preservation and/or restoration of key natural resources, such as special status wildlife and plant species habitats and riparian areas.**
6. **Aid in the preservation of cultural resources.** This goal recognizes that archeological sites, historic districts, historic structures, cultural landscapes and ethnographic resources are more at risk when heavy fuel loads burn than when frequent fires burn in light fuel accumulations.
7. **Use adaptive management to effectively incorporate scientific knowledge and monitoring results into fire management and policy.** Adaptive management is a concept for addressing uncertainty in environmental management. Management plans designed with built-in continuous assessment and processes for improvement allow for adjustments during project implementation based upon new findings.
8. **Incorporate the social aspects of project management into the fire program, including such things as smoke management, visibility, and visitor experience.**

9. Promote education, information and collaboration on the fire education and operation program with adjacent landowners, stakeholders, and the public.

10. Manage wildland fires to reduce smoke impacts on human health and visibility. Management options can include non-burning alternatives to fire, timing fires to take advantage of good smoke dispersal, and limiting the fuels available to fires.

Under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, The National Park Service is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as an essential part of this revision. This EIS will provide a comprehensive analysis of the impacts of various fire management alternatives to park resources.

Planning Process

There are typically three broad phases to producing a plan like this, with each phase consisting of various steps. During Phase One the planning team sets goals, identifies issues and collects data related to these issues. Phase Two efforts focus on defining alternative means for achieving goals and resolving issues. Phase Three consists of identifying a preferred alternative. Key public involvement steps occur during Phases One and Two. We are currently in Phase One where public input is gathered through written comment, electronic outreach and public meetings. During Phase Two the public will be invited to comment on a draft EIS.

How You Can Be Involved

Your input is very important to us and we invite your active participation in this process. There are a number of ways in which you can be involved. These include:

1. **Write:** Fill out the attached comment form and mail it to the address on the form no later than November 17, 2003. Comments may also be submitted separately in writing to this same address, or by email to grca_fmp@nps.gov. Please submit comments as a text file avoiding the use of special characters and any form of encryption. Please also include your name, email address and mailing address in your message.

2. **Attend Public Scoping Meetings:** A series of public open houses will be held this fall in Phoenix, Flagstaff, Kanab, Page and Grand Canyon. Dates and locations for these workshops are as follows:

Kanab, Utah: Wednesday, October 15, 2003. The meeting will be held from 4 pm to 7 pm at the Holiday Inn Express at 815 East Highway 89 in Kanab.

Page, Arizona: Monday, October 20, 2003. The meeting will be held from 4 pm to 7 pm at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, 691 Scenic View Drive.

Grand Canyon, Arizona: Tuesday October 21, 2003. The meeting will be held from 4 pm to 8 pm in the Community Building in Grand Canyon National Park.

Phoenix, Arizona: Wednesday, October 22, 2003. The meeting will be held from 4 pm to 7 pm at Fire Station Number 30, 2701 W. Belmont (1 block south of Northern).

Flagstaff, Arizona: Thursday, October 23, 2003. The meeting will be held from 4:15 pm to 7:30 pm at the Flagstaff Public Library, 300 West Aspen.

3. **Stay Informed:** Visit www.nps.gov/grca/fire/plan/ to keep apprised of the planning process and to submit comments during public comment periods. Our goal is to post all future information and documents related to the fire management plan on this website.

Please note names and addresses of respondents become part of the public record and may be released if requested under the Freedom of Information Act. Comments, including name and home address of respondents will be available for public review in our office during regular business hours. Individual respondents may request their name and home address be withheld from the record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. If you would like your name and/or address withheld, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

We appreciate your involvement in this process. If you have any specific questions regarding the fire management planning process, please call Dan Oltrogge, Fire Management Officer, at 928-638-7822.

Sincerely,

Joseph F. Alston
Superintendent

Attachment

Cc: Dan Oltrogge
Jill Beshears

If you would like to receive a printed copy of the Environmental Impact Statement for this project when it is complete, please contact the park in writing at the address on the comment form (P.O. Box 129, Grand Canyon, Arizona 86023), by calling Sara White, Compliance Officer, at (928) 638-7956, or by email to grca_fmp@nps.gov and one will be sent to you during the comment period. If you do not respond to this request or do not otherwise comment during the public scoping period, a hard copy of the EIS will not be sent to you. However, please note that the EIS (when complete) will be available on the Grand Canyon National Park website at <http://www.nps.gov/grca/fire/plan/>



FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

Record comments for each issue of concern. Your complete and concise comments will enable NPS to properly identify issues and organize them for analysis. Please feel free to attach pages as needed for any additional comments.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

☐ Please keep my name and address confidential.

Comments:

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Comments, including name and home address of respondents, will be available for public review in our office during regular business hours. Individual respondents may request their name and home address be withheld from the record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. If you would like your name and/or address withheld, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

There are three ways to submit comments:

1. Fill out this form, fold it to show the pre-printed address on the reverse, then stamp, seal and mail.
2. Visit www.nps.gov/grca/fire/plan/ and fill out this form electronically.
3. Send an email to grca_fmp@nps.gov. Please submit email comments as a text file avoiding the use of special characters and any form of encryption. Please also include your name, email address and mailing address in your message.

Please submit your comments no later than November 17, 2003.

Grand Canyon National Park is currently operating under the guidance of a Fire Management Plan prepared in 1992. This plan needs to be revised. The National Park Service is now beginning the preparation of a new fire management plan that incorporates the latest science and the most recent federal fire policy. Under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the National Park Service is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as an essential part of this revision. This EIS will provide a comprehensive analysis of the impacts of various fire management alternatives to park resources. The National Park Service invites your input in order to identify issues and concerns you may have related to fire management at Grand Canyon National Park. This comment form (see reverse side and on our website) is one public outreach method developed to capture your comments. We appreciate your interest in fire management at Grand Canyon National Park and encourage your participation in this planning process.

Fire Management Plan Team
Grand Canyon National Park
P.O. Box 129
Grand Canyon, Arizona 86023